

that would begin to close loopholes that have too often resulted in guns getting into the wrong hands by allowing vendors at gun shows and flea markets to sell firearms without conducting background checks. The Senate is to be applauded for this action. The Senate had the courage to pass a bill that dealt with the issue of juvenile justice and gun violence in a sensible and thoughtful manner.

In the House, that same courage appeared to be lacking in too many of our colleagues. As a mother of five and grandmother of thirteen, I empathize with the families who lost children in Littleton, Colorado and with the thousands of other families across this nation who have seen violent crime rob them of their loved ones. These are losses that can never be forgotten and that leave a lasting void no one can fill.

Unfortunately, the American people were the big losers in the debate on the House floor over gun safety last month. Hours of floor debate over three days and nights produced nothing that can comfort those who have already lost a family member to gun violence and provided no real meaningful measures to ensure the future safety of our children.

The fight for sensible gun control is not over. Those of us who believe in closing gun loopholes will continue our efforts. Three months ago, I spoke to many members of Family and Friends of Murder Victims assembled in Rose Hills Memorial Park to honor their slain loved ones during Victims Rights Week. I pledged to them that I would work to ensure we establish laws and programs that help prevent the additional loss of innocent lives and to strengthen victims' rights. I intend to keep that pledge.

Let us look at the facts: In the five years that the Brady Bill has been in effect, requiring a three business-day waiting period for a gun purchase, more than 400,000 illegal gun sales, two-thirds of which involved either convicted felons or people with a current felony indictment, were blocked. This is clear evidence that this law works and that we are on the right path.

However, we still have far to go. Studies show that one in four gun murders are committed by people aged 18 to 20. Furthermore, about two-thirds of all homicides involve the use of a gun. Also consider that domestic violence often turns into homicide in many instances where guns are readily available, and that law enforcement officials support gun safety because it saves police officers' lives.

These facts demand our immediate attention. It is no wonder that a recent Pew Research survey found that 65% of the nation believes gun control is more important than the right to bear arms. Similarly, a Gallup Poll shows that 79% of Americans support mandatory registration of all firearms.

I wholeheartedly support a rational gun safety policy to close loopholes that have allowed too many individuals to skirt laws designed to prevent guns from getting into the wrong hands—often the hands of felons or minors.

We should strengthen the Brady law and fight for new gun safety measures that include: a three business-day waiting period to complete background checks on people buying guns at gun shows and flea markets—just like sales at retail outlets; banning the import of large-capacity ammunition clips; raising the national age of handgun ownership from 18 to

21; gun safety locks to accompany all new firearm sales; and preventing serious juvenile felons from ever owning guns.

We can achieve all of this if the members of the House have the will and the American people make it clear to their representatives that they demand action on gun safety. Let us stop the delay. Let us pass meaningful gun safety legislation.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on my Special Order this evening.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

THE REPUBLICAN AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TANCREDI). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHAFER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the recognition for this hour that I reserve on behalf of the Republican majority. And, specifically, for those Members of the Theme Team and any Member of the Republican Conference that has anything to discuss this evening, I invite them to come down to the floor now and join me in the next hour in discussing topics relative to our majority agenda on the House floor.

That agenda, of course, includes an effort to save and secure a retirement security system through Social Security and Medicare. It also involves our efforts to reduce the tax burden on the American people. The third item is to build the strongest national defense in the country, in the world, one that allows for complete security for our Nation and for our children, and the third effort is to try to create the best education system on the planet.

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Those are three goals towards which we are working vigorously, and hoping to accomplish and achieve.

I want to start out by talking about a fifth topic, one that is important to my constituents and one that is fresh on my mind just coming back from a weekend of visiting with constituents. The topic back home was the Endangered Species Act.

The Committee on Resources has a special task force that visited Colorado and held a hearing in the town of Greeley. We had a great hearing. One of our colleagues, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), was able to come up to Greeley and join us, as well as one of the members of the Senate, Senator CAMPBELL. Also, the fourth member of that group was the chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO).

We had a great hearing. We heard from many, many people involved in agriculture in Colorado, and those who are in the business of wildlife management and the science of trying to preserve and protect endangered species, and prevent certain species from becoming listed on that list.

We also heard from a number of individuals from environmental groups. But the consensus clearly was that the Endangered Species Act is broken and needs to be fixed; that the act needs to be addressed in wholesale fashion and dramatically reformed.

It is very clear that the notion of protecting and preserving endangered species is a good one, and one that ought to be maintained. It is a noble goal, a worthwhile goal. It is a public goal.

The unfortunate consequence, however, of the Endangered Species Act is that the individual who happens to find one of these species on his or her property bears the almost exclusive burden in shouldering the cost of protecting and preserving and achieving this public goal of species recovery. That is the unfortunate part of it. It is the unfair part of the Endangered Species Act.

Once again, I want to suggest that those we heard from in Colorado, from the farming and ranching community, from the homebuilders in Colorado, those who represent municipalities, as well, we heard from a county commissioner, a State legislator, all of these people really and truly believe that we ought to do everything we can to protect and preserve species, and we certainly do not want to see them go extinct as a result of any human activity.

But they also understand the importance of a local perspective in achieving a strategy to secure these public goals of species recovery and protection of species.

We heard from a county commissioner, for example, Kathay Reynolds, the county commissioner in Lambert County, who was disappointed that the Fish and Wildlife Service did not reach out enough to her and her constituency in devising the rules to protect a mouse, a mouse called the Prebles Meadow Jumping Mouse. This is a mouse that looks just like the Western Jumping Mouse that is a more hardy variety in Colorado.

The mouse has been listed. Let me say that the mouse seems to like water. It hangs out around rivers and streams and irrigation ditches, which in the West is critical in a semi-arid region such as ours when it comes to agriculture. So the mouse likes to be around the water and in the tall grass around the water.

If you happen to find a mouse, one of these Prebles Meadow Jumping Mice in and around your property, your life is about to change, because under the proposed rules by the Fish and Wildlife Service, that means that you can no longer maintain your irrigation canals and ditches. It means that, in many cases, you may have to divert your